

Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary & Secondary Education

Special Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2009

A Special Meeting of the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 & convened at 4:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Flanders, Guida, Shimberg, Cano-Morales; Regent Callahan arrived at 5:30pm.

Funding Formula

RIDE staff members, Andy Andrade and Carolyn Dias joined the members of the Board for a discussion of the funding formula. Copies of the House and Senate bills were distributed along with a document comparing the Senate bill with the Regents Guiding Principles. The group discussed both bills, in detail. Additionally, the Regents talked about the costing out of the new BEP and questioned if the state could afford to educate every child according to the cost out. Deputy Commissioner David Abbot described the process now currently moving from mapping standards to identifying indicators. Commissioner Deborah Gist explained to the group that once the BEP is costed out, it will be easier for the Regents and Department to show what a quality education looks like and what it will cost. Marcia Reback, President of RIFT, commented on what affect the loss of students in some districts has on the passage of a funding formula. Next, the group discussed “next steps”. It was decided that meetings would be scheduled to speak with Senator Hanna Gallo and Representative Edith Ajillo, who are sponsoring different House and Senate funding formula bills. Also, the department will reach out to Funding Our Future, the group that has been working on the funding formula. The Regents would like any funding bill to mirror the Board of Regents “Guiding Principles”, but discussed the need to be flexible in bringing the groups together to support one common bill. They would support a phase in of the formula as a compromise, but said that it is important that the money follows the child and that when enrollment goes down, so should state aid.

Teacher Contract Bill

Marcia Reback spoke to the group about bills relating to teacher contracts currently being considered by the legislature. The group talked about the “perpetual contract” bill and “last best offer”, teacher strike and work to rule.

Other Budget & Legislative Topics

Elimination of Article 31 Funding – Commissioner Gist spoke about what had expired in regards to the Charter School legislation, just passed by the General Assembly. She then told the Regents that she wants to be sure that next year there is a process in place that ensures that the members of the Board have an opportunity to develop a “holistic” response to the budget proposals and legislation. Regent Callahan expressed her concerns about the cuts to the professional development funds. The group discussed how districts might use some of their ARRA funds.

Capitol Budget – RIDE staff, Carolyn Dias distributed the DRAFT Capital Budget Documents that will come before the Board for approval on August 6. She briefly walked the Regents through the process and the projects, highlighting the two new projects – the Davies Career & Technical School window replacement and paving. The group discussed the Paul W. Crowley Career and Technical Center to be built in Newport. Ms. Dias told them that the feasibility study has been completed and the next step will be to come back with building plans and land purchase. Members of the Board expressed their concern about the cost of some of the projects and their inability to impact past decisions.

2010 Budget - Carolyn Dias distributed a FY 2010 Budget Update package, as attached. She told the members of the Board that the projected FY 2010 budget deficit could now exceed over \$100 million and the total reduction for RIDE is currently \$2.7 million, but will probably increase. She reviewed the reduction allocations to the Department, Davies Career & Tech., RI School for the Deaf, the Metropolitan Career & Tech. Center, Education Aid, Central Falls, School Housing Aid, and Teachers’ Retirement. Ms. Dias explained that the FY 2011 budget targets and instructions have not been issued yet, but additional reductions are expected. The Regents talked about the necessity of being aggressive advocates for education.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.